

EAGLE PICHER CAREFREE BATTERY (SOCORRO COUNTY) SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO



EPA REGION 6 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 02

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Site ID: 0600805

Last Updated: May 2012
No new updates as of: July 2012

Background

The former Eagle Picher Carefree Batteries site is located approximately two miles north of the city of Socorro, Socorro County, New Mexico. The Site is located in the Socorro Basin. The property has been owned by the federal, state and city governments as well as a private company. In 1964 the city sold 173 acres to Eagle Picher, Inc where until 1976, Eagle Picher manufactured circuit boards, antennae assemblies, and non-automotive lead-acid batteries among other things. Eagle Picher deeded the property back to the City where until October 1977; the City operated a municipal landfill on part of the property. In 1979, the City leased the 173-acre property back to Eagle Picher for light manufacturing, in 1995, the lease was modified to include only 10.9 acres and in November of 2000 the lease to Eagle Picher expired. The site continues to be owned by the City.

Today, the site encompasses approximately 173 acres of mostly undeveloped land and includes a 40,000 square foot manufacturing facility built by Eagle Picher, two sewage lagoons, an industrial waste pit, abandoned buildings, a closed City landfill, and an active City drinking water supply well ("Eagle Picher Well").

The contaminants of concern include trichloroethene (TCE) and 1, 1-Dichloroethene (1,1-DCE) in the groundwater and lead, chromium, and cadmium in the soil. November 1987, chlorinated compounds were detected in a City of Socorro municipal drinking water supply well.

The population of Socorro, New Mexico is approximately 9,000 individuals. Since 1987, the City has installed a city water line to at least five residences that previously obtained their drinking water from private drinking water wells.



Current Status

In May 2012, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) in cooperation with the EPA will be conducting soil vapor sampling along several transects across the lateral extent of the plume. The EPA and NMED to date have completed a series of investigations to determine the current condition of the Site and the potential risk it presents to the local community. This report was finalized in April 2007. The Site was added to the National Priorities List on September 19, 2007. EPA, with NMED taking the lead, are

currently planning the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) start at the Site during the 2012 fiscal year.

In March 2009, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) released a Public Health Assessment report for the site.

A public availability session took place in Socorro in late August 2010.

A groundwater sampling event was performed from November 8 through November 18, 2010. Approximately 38 irrigation, private domestic, municipal, and monitoring wells were tested for VOAs, Semi-VOAs, and metals. Groundwater sampling results may be presented at a public availability session in early February 2011.

Currently (2011), the State of New Mexico (NMED) has made application for a Cooperative Agreement with the EPA to take the lead in the RI/FS for Eagle Picher Carefree Batteries. The U.S. EPA Region 6 is currently planning on awarding the Cooperative Agreement by the end of September, 2011.

Site Description

Location: The former Eagle Picher Carefree Batteries manufacturing building is located approximately two miles north of Socorro, New Mexico at latitude 34° 05' 59" north, longitude 106° 54' 23" west. The Eagle Picher Carefree Batteries Site (Site) boundaries are not defined since the full extent and nature of contamination has not been delineated.

Population: The population of Socorro, New Mexico is approximately 9,200 individuals.

Setting: The former Eagle Picher property encompasses approximately 173 acres of mostly undeveloped land and includes a 40,000 square foot manufacturing facility built by Eagle Picher in 1964, two sewage lagoons that received the facility's industrial and sewage waste until the 1980s, an industrial waste pit that received the facility's industrial waste, abandoned buildings of a State Tuberculosis Sanitarium that were occupied by Eagle Picher in 1963-1964, a closed City landfill used from October 1977 to January 1980, and an active City drinking water supply well ("Eagle Picher Well").

The Site is located in the Socorro Basin, which lies within the Basin and Range Province and within the Rio Grande Rift. The principal aquifer system of the Socorro Basin is located in the Tertiary and Quaternary Santa Fe Group and overlying Quaternary deposits. The aquifer system can be divided into three subunits: the shallow aquifer (Quaternary deposits and Sierra Ladrones Formation of the Santa Fe Group), the Popotosa confining bed, and the Popotosa aquifer. The majority of water supply wells in the Socorro area are completed in the shallow aquifer.

Site History

The property was first owned by the U.S. Government and was used as Civilian Conservation Corps barracks in 1932. From 1936 to 1956, the facility was a State of New Mexico tuberculosis sanitarium. In 1962, ownership of the property was transferred from the State of New Mexico to the City of Socorro (the "City"). In 1964, the City sold the 173-acre property to Eagle Picher, Inc. (Eagle Picher). From 1963 until 1976, Eagle Picher operated a manufacturing plant on the Site. Products manufactured during this period included circuit boards, antennae assemblies, and non-automotive lead-acid batteries. In 1976, Eagle Picher deeded the property back to the City. In 1977, the City leased a portion of the property to a company for the purpose of the manufacture of jewelry. The City also operated a municipal landfill at the property from October 1977 to January 1980. In 1979, the City leased the 173-acre property to Eagle Picher for light manufacturing, including, but not limited to the production of non-automotive lead-acid batteries. In 1995, the lease was modified to include only 10.9 acres of the original 173-acre property. The lease to Eagle Picher expired in November 2000. The Site continues to be owned by the City.

In November 1987, chlorinated compounds were detected in a City of Socorro municipal drinking water supply well. As a result, numerous investigations were conducted for the purpose of determining the source of the contamination. In addition, municipal and private drinking water supply wells have been sampled/monitored to ensure the water supply meets all State and Federal drinking water standards. Since 1987, the City has installed a city water line to at least five residences that previously obtained their drinking water from private drinking water wells.

Most recently, EPA, in cooperation with the NMED, conducted a series of investigations including sampling ground water, soil, and soil vapor between 2004 and 2006. The purpose of these investigations was to determine the current condition of the Site, the source of the observed ground water contamination, and the potential risk it presents to the local community. A remedial investigation/feasibility study work plan is being developed by the EPA.

Wastes and Volume

Principal Pollutants:

- Trichloroethene (TCE) (ground water)
- 1,1-Dichloroethene (1,1-DCE) (ground water)
- Lead (soil)
- Chromium (soil)
- Cadmium (soil)

Volume:

- Unknown

National Priorities Listing (NPL) History

Site HRS Score: 50.00
Proposal Date: March 7, 2007
Final Listing Date: September 19, 2007

Record of Decision

A Record of Decision (ROD) has not been initiated for this site.

Contacts

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